

Advisory Request from the Office of Research and Development: “New ORD Research Program Strategic Directions”

This project continues the interaction of EPA and the chartered SAB since 2007 on the long-term strategic directions of EPA's research programs. The SAB provided advice related to this topic through several advisory reports: “Comments on EPA’s Strategic Research Directions and Research Budget for FY 2008, dated March 13, 2007, (EPA-SAB-07-004”EPA's Strategic Research Directions 2008" dated November 26, 2008 (EPA-SAB-09-006); and “Office of Research and Development Strategic Research Directions and Integrated Transdisciplinary Research” dated July 8, 2010 (EPA-SAB-10-010).

Beginning with FY2012, the Office of Research and Development is restructuring its research programs. EPA is designing a new research framework that will enable us to meet the complex environmental challenges of the 21st century. The focus will be on developing a deeper understanding of environmental problems and informing sustainable solutions to meet our strategic goals.

To facilitate this review, ORD will provide the SAB with written documents that characterize the research directions envisioned for these programs and the ongoing stakeholder engagement process. ORD will also participate in meetings with the SAB to present program information and to discuss these programs with the Board.

ORD requests that the SAB work jointly with the Board of Scientific Counselors to review and advise on the strategic directions for the research program.

Tentative Charge:

The Agency requests that the Science Advisory Board (SAB) consider and comment on the new strategic directions for research. ORD’s new research structure is comprised of six research program areas, replacing the previous 13 programs. The focus of this activity will be on the strategic plans under development for the six program areas:

- Air, Climate, and Energy
- Safe and Sustainable Water Resources
- Sustainable and Healthy Communities
- Chemical Safety and Sustainability
- Human Health Risk Assessment
- Homeland Security

The SAB is requested to provide EPA with advice on the following:

- a) Do ORD's research programs, as presented to the SAB, align with the strategic program priorities identified by EPA’s National Program and Regional offices?
- b) Do ORD's research programs reflect coordination, and do they complement one another?
- c) Do ORD’s research plans reflect its commitment to sustainably protecting human health and the environment?
- d) Based on EPA’s presentations to the SAB, and Board members’ own knowledge of efforts in the broader scientific community, how well does ORD's research program appear to complement environmental science programs elsewhere?
- e) Based upon the SAB’s knowledge of ORD’s research programs, are these programs positioned to address the nation's highest priority, emerging environmental issues in the coming years?